

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-8 (canceled)

9. (currently amended) A method for picking up and handling filled, sealed, rectangular pouches where each of said pouches comprises two lateral films with a U-shaped folded bottom film between the lateral films and where the pouches stand on one of two longitudinal sides and said pouches are arranged in parallel in a row, said pouches having a facing upper longitudinal side, and wherein said pouches are picked up ~~and raised~~ with a gripper mechanism having finger-like gripper elements that are arranged in a comb-like manner, wherein the gripper elements are moved in a parallel path between adjacent upper longitudinal sides of adjacent pouches, in a longitudinal direction of the upper longitudinal sides, from the bottom side of the pouches.

10. (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein a row of 5 to 100 pouches is simultaneously gripped.

11. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the gripping mechanism has gripper elements between which an upper longitudinal side of a pouch can be gripped for each pouch to be picked up at least one of which is movable or has movable elements.

12. (original) A method according to claim 11, wherein said movable element is an extendable piston enabling a longitudinal side of a pouch to be picked up in clamping manner.

13. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein a main extension plane ~~containing~~ contains all of the lateral edges of said pouches, and where the pouches are gripped in an orientation in which the main extension plane of each pouch is inclined to the vertical by an angle of less than 60°.

14. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~13~~ 12, wherein the main extension plane of each pouch to be gripped is substantially vertical.

15. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9 wherein the ~~particular~~ longitudinal side on which each pouch stands has a horizontal orientation.